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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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SHIPMENTS OF PACKAGE BEES IN 1951

A total of 712 thousand pounds of package bees were shipped in 1951 -- 3 percent less than in 1950 and 48 percent below the peak year of 1947, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. However, shippers in California, Louisiana and Georgia report a much better season than in 1950 with increases of 10 percent, 5 percent and 7 percent respectively in pounds of bees shipped. Alabama shippers moved 1 percent more bees than in 1950. Shipments from Mississippi were down 10 percent. In Texas shipments were down sharply due to fewer shippers and reduced sales of those who remained in business.

There were about 290 thousand packages of bees shipped in 1951, compared with 300 thousand in 1950. Of the total pounds of bees shipped in 1951, about 46 percent moved in 2-pound packages, 45 percent in 3-pound, 6 percent in 4-pound and 2 percent in 5-pound packages. Bees shipped in units other than those mentioned above accounted for about 1 percent of the total shipments.

Colonies held for the production of package bees in 1951 totaled 185,500, about 6 percent fewer than in 1950 and 24 percent below the record number in 1948. Many shippers are changing their method of operations to produce honey as well as bees. Others are going out of the package bee business entirely. An average of 3.8 pounds of bees per colony were shipped in 1951 compared with 3.7 in 1950, 3.6 in 1949, 4.7 in 1948 and 5.7 pounds in 1947. Shipments of bees per colony were 4.7 pounds in Alabama, 4.6 pounds in Mississippi, 4.4 pounds in Louisiana, 3.8 pounds in Georgia, 3.4 pounds in California and 2.2 pounds in Texas.

Reports from package bee shippers indicate that they expect 1952 shipments to be about 3 percent smaller than in 1951. Actual shipments in 1951 were 2 percent below expectations, 1950 shipments were about 10 percent above the amount expected and 1949 and 1948 shipments were far below the expected shipments because of the slow movement of honey at relatively low prices.

In early February reports from shippers indicated that they had orders for about 40 percent of their expected 1952 shipments compared with 29 percent a year earlier, 23 percent in 1950, 47 percent in 1949, 64 percent in 1948, and 79 percent in 1947. Advance orders on hand as a percent of expected shipments were 72 percent in Texas, 53 percent in California, 48 percent in Alabama, 38 percent in Louisiana, 17 percent in Mississippi and 7 percent in Georgia.

Package bee shippers shipped 696 thousand queens in 1951 -- 3 percent less than in 1950.

The year 1951 saw little change in the position of the package bee producer. The squeeze continued with package prices down, production costs high and sharply increased express rates.

Canada imports large quantities of package bees from the United States mostly in the form of 2-pound packages. The extent of this business during the last 4 years was \$878,075 in 1948, \$484,492 in 1949, \$340,469 in 1950 and \$346,365 to the end of November 1951.

PACKAGE BEES - Number of packages and Total Pounds of Bees Shipped in 1950 and 1951

| State | Number of packages - 1951 | | | | | Other units | Total Pounds | |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------|--------|-------|---------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| | 1-2-lb. | 3-lb. | 4-lb. | 5-lb. | Total | Pounds | 1950 1/ | 1951 2/ |
| Georgia | 10,266 | 16,848 | 2,676 | 1,044 | 30,834 | - | 81,300 | 87,000 |
| Alabama | 33,299 | 21,586 | 1,946 | 452 | 57,283 | - | 140,000 | 141,400 |
| Mississippi | 15,909 | 12,107 | 429 | 329 | 28,774 | - | 79,500 | 71,500 |
| Louisiana | 23,771 | 25,657 | 933 | 51 | 50,412 | - | 122,400 | 128,500 |
| Texas | 10,338 | 6,720 | - | 10 | 17,068 | 6,214 | 73,600 | 47,100 |
| California | 62,919 | 17,102 | 4,114 | - | 84,135 | - | 176,000 | 193,600 |
| Other States | 6,191 | 7,740 | 312 | 1,230 | 15,473 | - | 63,000 | 43,000 |
| U. S. (1951) | 162,693 | 107,760 | 10,410 | 3,116 | 283,979 | 6,214 | - | 712,100 |
| U. S. (1950) | 150,310 | 125,562 | 8,592 | 2,176 | 286,640 | 13,246 | 735,800 | - |

1/ Revised.
2/ Preliminary.

| State | Colonies held in 1951 for production of package bees | | Bees shipped per colony | Expected 1952 1/ bee shipments as % of 1951 shipments | | Advance orders on hand Jan. 15 as percent of expected production | Queens shipped | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| | Number | Pounds | | Percent | Percent | | 1950 | 1951 |
| Georgia | 22,900 | 3.8 | | 100 | 7 | | 67,000 | 57,400 |
| Alabama | 29,800 | 4.7 | | 107 | 48 | | 179,000 | 177,900 |
| Mississippi | 15,500 | 4.6 | | 106 | 17 | | 66,500 | 71,500 |
| Louisiana | 29,000 | 4.4 | | 89 | 38 | | 127,700 | 128,500 |
| Texas | 21,400 | 2.2 | | 96 | 72 | | 98,000 | 81,000 |
| California | 56,900 | 3.4 | | 92 | 53 | | 141,900 | 154,800 |
| Other States | 10,000 | 4.3 | | 93 | 30 | | 40,000 | 25,000 |
| United States | 185,500 | 3.8 | | 97 | 40 | | 720,100 | 696,100 |

1/ As reported by shippers reporting expected shipments.